

## Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 262036Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 589

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POUCHED ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: JUNE POLL INDICATES CANADIAN VOTERS UNWILLING TO  
COUNT OUT LIBERALS

REF: OTTAWA 2317

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE EARLIER POLL RESULTS SHOWING WIDESPREAD  
VOTER DISENCHANTMENT WITH TRUDEAU AND LIBERAL GOVT, LATEST  
POLLS SHOULD BOOST LIBERAL SPIRITS SOMEWHAT. WHATEVER  
THEIR PREFERENCE, SLIGHT PLURALITY OF VOTERS STILL THINK  
LIBERALS WILL WIN NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS. OPINION SPLIT EQUALLY  
ON WHICH PARTY WOULD RENDER VOTER FAMILY "BETTER OFF." MOST  
RECENT POLLS REFLECT HEALTHY RESPECT OF VOTERS FOR LIBERAL  
WINNING WAYS AND FACT THAT PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE POP-  
ULARITY BUILT LARGELY ON LIBERAL MISTAKES RATHER THAN POSITIVE  
PC PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE CANADIAN ELECTORATE, ACCORDING TO RECENT  
GALLUP POLLS, PREFERS THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (PC) OVER  
THE LIBERAL BY 12 PERCENTAGE POINTS AND PLURALITY DISAPPROVES OF  
WAY TRUDEAU AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE GOVERNING (REFTEL), VOTERS  
BY A SLIGHT MARGIN STILL FEEL LIBERALS WILL WIN NEXT ELECTIONS.  
IN ANSWER TO QUESTION, "IRRESPECTIVE OF HOW YOU, YOURSELF,  
WILL VOTE, WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS?",  
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36 PERCENT FELT LIBERALS WILL WIN WHILE 34 PERCENT CHOSE

THE PC'S. TWENTY-FOUR PERCENT WERE UNDECIDED. GALLUP POLLING WAS DONE IN EARLY JUNE.

3. LIBERALS ALSO FARED RELATIVELY WELL IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, "IF YOU HAD TO MAKE UP YOUR MIND TODAY, UNDER WHICH FEDERAL PARTY DO YOU THINK YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE BETTER OFF?" TWENTY-THREE PERCENT OF POLLING SAMPLE FAVORED EACH PARTY. NOT SURPRISINGLY, LIBERAL BASE WAS HEAVILY FRENCH (33 PERCENT FRENCH; 18 PERCENT ENGLISH) WHILE PC SUPPORT WAS PREDOMINANTLY ANGO (32 PERCENT ENGLISH AND 6 PERCENT FRENCH).

4. COMMENT: SEEMING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THESE POLLS AND EARLIER COMPARATIVE OR APPROVAL POLLS SHOWING LIBERALS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE LIKELY EXPLAINED BY SEVERAL FACTORS. POLL RE LIKELY WINNER IN NEXT ELECTIONS IS TESTIMONY TO TRADITIONAL WINNING WAYS OF LIBERALS, WHO HAVE GOVERNED CANADA FOR 44 OF LAST 55 YEARS, AND TRUDEAU POTENTIAL RPT POTENTIAL TO TURN THINGS AROUND. EVEN PC LEADER JOE CLARK EXPRESSES FREQUENT, PUBLIC RESPECT FOR LIBERAL CAPACITY TO WIN AT NEARLY ANY COST AND HE CAUTIONS HIS FOLLOWERS NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THIS POTENTIAL. CANADIAN PUBLIC APPARENTLY WELL AWARE OF THIS FACT, REGARDLESS OF ITS PREFERENCE AT PRESENT TIME.

5. SECOND POLL RE WHICH PARTY WOULD LEAVE FAMILIES "BETTER OFF", ILLUSTRATES, IN OUR VIEW, A PRESENT WEAKNESS WHICH JOE CLARK AND PC'S MUST OVERCOME BEFORE NEXT ELECTIONS. UP TO NOW, CLARK AND PC'S HAVE GROWN IN POPULARITY LARGELY AS RESULT OF LIBERAL GOVERNMENT MISTAKES AND TRUDEAU DILETTANTISH STEWARDSHIP. ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE CAST OF PC POPULARITY REVEALED IN THE POLL SINCE VOTERS HARD PRESSED TO DETERMINE WHAT PC'S WOULD DO IF ELECTED.

6. THRUST OF BOTH POLLS COULD COALESCE WITH DETERMINATIVE EFFECT BETWEEN NOW AND 1978. CLARK AND PC'S LIKELY WILL BE FORCED OUT IN OPEN IN ENUNCIATING POLICIES ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERAL PROGRAM. THAT SITUATION SHOULD CLARIFY MANY ELEMENTS PRESENTLY UNCLEAR: EXTENT OF CLARK'S ABILITIES UNDER FIRE; CAPACITY OF PC'S TO ATTRACT MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM; AND FINALLY EXTENT TO WHICH TRUDEAU AND LIBERALS CAN OR WILL ROLL OUT "BIG RED MACHINE" (LIBERAL PARTY ORGANIZATION) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH DEVASTATED PC'S IN 1974.  
ENDERS

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## Message Attributes

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